Sino-Indo talks in Beijing

256. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRA SEKHAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the topic discussed at the Sino-Indo talks recently held at Beijing where Prime Minister recently visited; and

(b) the details of agreements signed and/or the decisions taken?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited China from 13 to 15 January 2008. PM held official talks with Premier Wen Jiabao and had separate meetings with Chinese President Hu Jinato and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, Wu Bangguo.

PM and Premier Wen Jiabao signed a joint document on a 'A Shared Vision for the 21 st Century between the Republic of India and People of China'. They also witnessed signing of ten other documents covering cooperation in various fields, namely: for Cooperation between the Planning Commission and National Development and Reform Commission of China; on Cooperation between the two Ministries of Railways; MoU between Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation of India and Ministry of Construction, PRC; for Cooperation in Land Resoure Management, Land Administration and Rehabilitation; MoU' on Joint Medical Mission to commemorate the Indian Medical Mission to China between Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC); MoU for cooperation between ICCR and CPAFFC; on Cooperation in the area of Geo-sciences; on Cooperation in traditional medicine; MoU on mutual cooperation between NABARD and Agricultural Development Bank of China; and Protocol of Phytosanitary Requirements for the Export of Tobacco Leaves from India to China.

Both sides agreed that India-China relations are of regional and global significance. They recognised their 'significant historical responsibility to ensure comprehensive, balanced and sustainable economic and social development of the two countries and to promote peace and development in Asia and the world as a whole. India-China relations are not targeted at any country, nor will it affect their friendship with other countries.' Both sides agreed to intensify further high-level exchanges between the leaders of the two countries. Both sides agreed that the Foreign Ministers of India and China will exchange visits in 2008. They also agreed to continue deepening the mutual understanding and trust between the armed forces and welcomed the successful conclusion of the first joint military training exercise and agreed to hold a second exercise in India in 2008. It was decided to increase the bilateral trade traget from 40 billion US dollars by 2010 to-60 billion US dollars. The two Prime Ministers mandated their Ministers of Commerce to examine the Feasibility Study on the benefits of a Regional Trading Arrangement and make recommendations at an early date. It was also decided to establish a high-level Business Leaders Forum to advise the two Prime Ministers on the future of economic ties. PM conveyed India's appreciation for China's assistance in providing flood season data for some trans-border rivers. Both leaders agreed to expand cooperation in this area through the Expert Level Mechanism. In pursuance of the India-China Science & Technology Partnership agreed during the visit of Chinese President to India in November 2006, both sides have now identified earthquake engineering, disaster management, climate change, biotechnology and nano sciences as areas for further cooperation in the priority area of science and technology

The two Prime Minister welcomed the progress made by the Special Representatives in seeking a framework for settlement of the boundary question that is fair, reasonable, mutually acceptable, and based on the agreement on Guiding Priniciples and Political Parameters signed in April 2005. While the SRs continue their efforts, both sides reiterated their mutual commitment to maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

PM's visit has led to a broadening of our functional cooperation in bilateral areas and to the deepening of mutual understanding between our two countries.

Ill-treatment of Ethnic Indians in Malaysia

557. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India expressed concern over the alleged ill-treatment of ethnic Indians in Malaysia;

(b) whether at least 10,000 ethnic Indians took part in demonstration, banned by Government, in Kuala Lumpur complaining alleged marginalization of ethnic Indians in Malaysia;

(c) whether Indians make up 8 per cent of Malaysia's 27 million people, the third biggest group after ethnic Malays and Chinese; and

(d) if so, points raised by India to the Malaysian Government?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) **In** a *suo motu* statement made in Parliament on 30 November 2007, the Minister of External Affairs referred to concerns expressed by Hon'ble Members of Parliament regarding **the** alleged harassment of participants of the rally organised by the Hindu Rights Action Force (HINDRAF) in Kuala Lumpur on 25 November 2007 and subsequent related matters. The Minister of External Affairs stated that Government remain deeply solicitous for the welfare of people of Indian origin living abroad and noted that there is a large community of people of Indian origin in Malaysia who are citizens of that country. He added that we have friendly relations with Malaysia and we are in touch with the Malaysian authorities **in** the related matter.

(b) The Hindu Rights Action Force (HINDRAF) organised a tally in Kuala Lumpur on 25 November 2007, which was attended by several thousand persons of Indian origin. The stated purpose of the rally was to had over a petition to the British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur seeking the support of Queen Elizabeth II for a class action suit filed in the UK for the exploitation of Indians who were brought to Malaysia as indentured labour. The rally also sought to highlight various concerns and grievances of the Indian community in Malaysia.

(c) There are approximately 1.9 million people of Indian origin in Malaysia who account for about 8% of the country's population. Indians are the third largest ethnic group in Malaysia, after Malays and Chinese.

(d) During interactions with Malaysian authorities, concerns expressed in India, including in the Parliament, regarding developments pertaining to the Indian community in Malaysia have been suitably conveyed.